

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



COMMISSION ON LATINO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Ana Elsa Aviles
Chair

Mercedes Lemp
OLA Director

MEETING MINUTES

August 5, 2009

Reeves Center / OLA Conference Room (2000 14th Street, NW, 2nd Floor)

Members Present: Ana Elsa Aviles, Moises Nuñez, Daniell Bohnett, Tito Castro, Gilberto Solano, Alina Gomez, Hugo Tovar, Ayana Rockett

Via Phone: Mauricio Fraga-Rosenfeld,

OLA Staff Present: George Escobar

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm after a quorum was attained.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

T. Castro made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 8th 2009 Commission meeting. The motion was seconded by M. Nuñez and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Committee Updates

M. Nuñez on behalf of the Economic Development Committee reported that they had met during the past month and are continuing to develop a project in collaboration with the Office on Latino Affairs. The goal is to request the DC Office of Planning initiate an action plan for the mid 14th Street commercial corridor that would guide future development, assist small businesses and coordinate inter-agency responses by the DC government to the needs identified by the residential and business community of the corridor. The group will set up meetings with the Tivoli North Business Association, several Faith Based Organizations and other community-based organizations.

T. Castro reported that the Civil Rights Committee is in the middle of their assessment as to the direction the committee wants to focus. Initial thoughts are centered on police relations as well as 4th and 5th amendment rights. A. Aviles mentioned the committee should also look to incorporate issues related to the implementation of the DC Language Access Act across all government agencies.

A. Aviles reported the Education Committee met and are in the process of scheduling additional meetings to review reports and assess the impact the city's educational reforms have had on the Latino community.

Commission Business

A. Aviles reported that her term has expired as of July 26th, 2009. She added that Josh Lopez and Hugo Tovar's terms are expiring this summer as well. Josh Lopez recently communicated to Chair Aviles his desire to step down from the Commission and not request another term. A. Aviles also reported that she met with the Director of the Office of Boards and Commissions (OBC) who

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informed her that any activity the Commission decides to engage in must go through the OBC first, particularly any activity that seeks to engage another agency or government entity. Testimony before the Council should be vetted through the Mayor's Office of Policy and Legislative Affairs prior to submission. A. Aviles also communicated to the OBC Director her intention to step down from the chairmanship of the Commission due to her term ending and other demands that would make it challenging to remain on the Commission as a member, should the Mayor approve an extension. The OBC Director indicated to Ms. Aviles that she was welcome to stay on until elections were held and assist in the transition of a new Chair.

Discussion

A. Aviles explained she had met with several community leaders recently. In these conversations she found many people are not aware of the makeup or current activities of the Commission. She also learned about other concerns expressed by Latino activists that could be addressed by improving the communication and outreach with the Latino community and its advocates. In response to this H. Tovar suggested creating a forum or similar engagement with the Latino community where these concerns can be brought forth in a constructive manner, allow the Commission an opportunity to introduce themselves to the community and learn more about their needs and exchange ideas on how to address these concerns. The Commission then proceeded to form a planning committee to follow-up on these issues and assess the feasibility of moving forward with this idea – the planning committee will be composed of H. Tovar, M. Nuñez, A. Rockett, D. Bohnett, M. Fraga-Rosenfeld, and A. Aviles.

OLA Director's Report

G. Escobar, Deputy Director of OLA (Director Lemp was on leave) provided a brief report on OLA's work including upcoming events, projects and initiatives that the office has been planning and executing. The primary focus of the report was the recent budget cuts incurred by OLA for FY2010. In all, the DC Council cut \$775,000 from the proposed FY10 budget. These cuts will be taken from the grants program and will only affect FY10 Council earmarks previously awarded and grant amounts traditionally provided to entities on a non-competitive basis. Competitive grants awarded by the agency will be funded at similar amounts as in years past. As a result of earlier cuts, OLA will cut one staff position for FY10.

Election Discussion

Given A. Aviles's term ending and not being able to remain as Chair of the Commission, she opened the floor to discuss nominations and an election process for a new Chair, based on past practice of the Commission. At this point, Moises Nuñez voiced his intention to be considered by the Commission for the position of Chair in a transitional role for approximately 6 months. He cited his experience with the Latino community, the fact he was raised in the community and his knowledge of the issues that most affect it through his involvement with multiple community-based and representative entities such as MPD's Citizen Advisory Committee as well as many others, as his greatest qualifications for the position.

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In addition, Gilberto Solano reiterated his interest in being nominated and elected as Chair. He cited his intention to be a spokesperson in the community on behalf of the Commission in order to advocate for the issues they care about most. G. Solano spoke about his desire to incorporate education and communication among his highest priorities. The Chair acknowledged both self-nominations as asked for a motion to complete the elections process.

Tito Castro motioned to nominate both Moises Nuñez and Gilberto Solano for the position of Chair of the Commission on Latino Community Development. D. Bohnett seconded the joint nomination and the motion was carried unanimously. Both M. Nuñez and G. Solano accepted the nomination.

A. Rockett motioned to hold the election immediately for Chair of the Commission. A. Gomez seconded the motion and the motion was carried unanimously.

Election of New Chairperson for the Commission on Latino Community Development

Given that a quorum was present at the meeting with the attendance of nine (9) commission members, Chair Aviles stated that an election could be held for the position of Commission Chair with the two nominated Commission members, Moises Nuñez and Gilberto Solano. Each member present voted for his/her preferred candidate through a secret ballot process by writing the name of their choice candidate on a folded piece of paper. Ballots were collected by OLA Deputy Director G. Escobar who placed them in a jar. G. Escobar then unfolded each piece of paper and revealed the vote count for each candidate and tallied the results.

The final vote count situated Moises Nuñez with five (5) votes and Gilberto Solano with four (4) votes. M. Nuñez was elected Chair of the Commission on Latino Community Development and was congratulated by everyone present at the meeting. AE Aviles then transferred the Chairmanship position to M. Nunez so he could begin to Chair the meeting as the agenda came to a close.

In his first act as Chair, M. Nuñez called for the creation of a vice-chair to assist in leading the Commission. In addition, he expressed his sincere thanks to outgoing Chair A. Aviles for all her work during the past year. For her part, A. Aviles expressed her thanks and indicated the satisfaction and rewarding experience of serving the Latino community alongside the Commission.

Next Meeting

Present Commission members scheduled the next Commission meeting for Wednesday September 2nd at 6:30 pm.

Adjournment

The Chair motioned to adjourn the meeting and the motion was seconded by A. Aviles. The motion was approved unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.